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The Saturday Review of Literature

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FRANZ WERFEL

"The barren hills of Israel rise through his pages and shout with life; the corridor of Palestine is once again 'the center of the world,' and what happens in the little nation of farmers and traders is of higher importance than the destinies of all the glittering empires . . .

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THE LITERATURE OF A PUZZLING LAND

Laughing Odyssey

By Eileen Bigland

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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, NEW YORK

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The New Books

Polish Hypocrite

A GREAT LORD. By Paul Frischauer. New York: Random House. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

THIS historical novel is original in concept, dignified in execution, and discriminating in its estimate of human values. It develops the theme of Polish nationalism in the age of Napoleon, the futile struggle of patriots to weld together once more the dissociated fragments of what had once been a nation. The time had not yet come for Poland to re-emerge as a unified state, and the reason lay in the petty ambitions, the inordinate selfishness, of the feudal princelings whose powers had been unimpaired by the tripartite division between Russia, Austria, and Prussia. These princelings provide such excellent material for psychological analysis that Mr. Frischauer has been able to develop out of character studies alone tension enough for an entire novel.

The great Lord of the title is Prince Andreas Rasonski, the younger son of a great Polish house. He is physically so repulsive that women shudder to look at him; his mental habits are imbued with a hypocrisy that would have shocked Tartuffe; but he has the makings of success. His oily maneuverings are repeatedly so shrewd that he rises from the most ineffectual poverty to be the founder of a new family. He turns every reverse somehow to his advantage. The woman he loves becomes Napoleon's mistress; Rasonski marries her and receives in return four handsome estates with six hundred serfs. When she bears Napoleon a son, it is Rasonski who reaps the rewards. He is the central figure of the narrative, it is his story, and Mr. Frischauer has known exactly how to give to him the strange fascination which lies in a character so degenerate, so diabolical. There is no condemnation, no moral vituperation. Prince Rasonski is a masterpiece of subtle character portrayal.

The historical facts of the novel are somewhat mysterious. The author claims that they come from the papers of a distinguished Polish family whose name he cannot divulge, and that he has taken only minor liberties with the materials which have thus been given to him. Certainly they present nothing that is implausible. But such a story, involving a hitherto unknown son of Napoleon's, makes one anxious to learn more about the documentary evidence concerning which Mr. Frischauer is so secretive.

From the jacket of "Starting Point."

Young Ideals

STARTING POINT. By C. Day Lewis. New York: Harper & Bros. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE STEVENS

MR. LEWIS may not be the most profound member of the new British firm of writers known as Auden, Spender & Co., but he is the most versatile. Besides his poetry, he has written a poignant novel of young love, "The Friendly Tree," which not enough people read; also a book for boys, and—under the pseudonym of Nicholas Blake—a first rate detective story. His new novel is another story of youth, written with a humor and subtlety that recall E. M. Forster's earlier books. It tells of four young men who come out of Oxford together, at the time of the general strike, and their efforts to find their places in the world—to find a starting point "from which there is no turning back." It is a story of young ideals, brilliantly recaptured, and of the way their shine is rubbed off when they come in contact with practical necessities: jobs, wives, children.

Like Forster, Mr. Lewis handles personal relationships with sympathetic penetration. But where Forster could dive, suddenly and recklessly, into the obscurities of human nature, Mr. Lewis's one attempt to do this lands him in violence and melodrama. Also, his implied argument for communism—the central character embraces the party and goes to Spain as a volunteer—is superficial and naive. With these reservations "Starting Point" is recommended. It is extremely well written; and not only does it have engaging, interesting characters, it has an attractive personality of its own. If you have missed E. M. Forster, the earlier Huxley, and the earlier Virginia Woolf from the current book world, "Starting Point" should be your meat.

Prophet of Nations

HEARKEN UNTO THE VOICE. By Franz Werfel. New York: The Viking Press. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

THIS book opens with one of those vision devices, old when "The Castle of Otranto" was new, for transporting the reader from the present to the past with the conviction that one is as real as the other. It is difficult to see any reason for using it but the literary convention of the language in which Werfel writes; once he has reached his proper business, which is the life of Jeremiah, prophet of nations, he swings along as irresistibly as a charge of cavalry. The barren hills of Israel rise through his pages and shout with life; the corridor of Palestine is once again "the center of the world," and what happens in the little nation of farmers and traders is of higher importance than the destinies of all the glittering empires.

Why? Mainly because Werfel has not yielded to the besetting temptation of historical novelists—that of substituting stage-sets for psychology—of trying to make us believe that because a man wore a purple nightgown in the street, he thought in terms to which we must be forever strangers. Everything is explained—which is to say that there is no moment at which one can say of any character in the book: "Given the same background I would have behaved quite differently." The people of "Hearken Unto the Voice" are walking Broadway—or, more likely, Grand Street—today.

Not because the author has modernized them in the John Erskine manner either. The great strength of his work lies in the fact that he has perfectly apprehended how the thinkers of the Jewish royal age found spiritual experience the paramount reality. Detailing this spiritual experience, making it consistent, demands of him that he step boldly into the region of what is frequently called the supernatural—of apocalyptic vision, miracle, and metaphysics. It demands that he explain how a

Next Week

REVOLT, U. S. A.
By LAMAR MIDDLETON
Reviewed by Allan Nevins

DANGER IS MY BUSINESS
By JOHN D. CRAIG
Reviewed by Hassoldt Davis

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God of love could also be a jealous God. He achieves all these tasks with a complete and satisfying success; no consistory of bishops could have produced a more convincing textbook of theology.

In fact, Werfel has succeeded so completely in this direction that a great many people will not like the book, in the same way that a great many people did not like Jeremiah the prophet, and for the same reasons. The emotional impact is so potent that it is apt to make one overlook the surge and vigor of the narrative, the justice of the characterization, and the adequacy with which the period has been re-created. If one can lodge a general criticism, this re-creation is sometimes a trifle too adequate—we get so much of scenes in the Temple of Jerusalem and the streets of Memphis that a few pages read like an archeological catalogue. But this is a detail, and a quibbling detail; for perhaps even an elaborate description of the choir of the sons of Asaph is necessary to the best reconstruction ever seen of how one of the great books of the Bible came into being.

Hollywood Hater

I SHOULD HAVE STAYED HOME. By Horace McCoy. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

HORACE McCOY hates Hollywood, not enough to stay away from it but enough to get all the bile out of his system in a short, bitter, name-calling novel. It's about two extras and how they are swallowed up in a city infested with stony-hearted producers, drunken directors, maniacal writers, lecherous women, and gigolos. McCoy wastes no sympathy upon his youngsters, and very little attention. We hardly get to know more of them than their names, for all of his energies are focussed upon giving us a sharp, vengeful picture of Movietown. It may be a true picture, although an institution that can easily display a diversity of phenomena ranging from Paul Muni to Shirley Temple would seem to need a fuller explanation. But McCoy is talking to the kids who come in in flocks to become stars, the kids who never read books like this. They've got their eyes on that one-in-a-thousand chance, and they've seen "A Star is Born," in which the little girl from the small town comes through to the top. He wants to show them the other kind of ending. He does it briskly, honestly, with a wistful reference to "the old master, Dr. Hemingway, who could have done it better than anybody." And now, if the studios like his book, they'll buy it, clean it up, tack on that happy ending, and make a picture that will start a new trek to Hollywood. The last word is theirs.

Self-Pitying Generation

THE BIG FIRM. By Amabel Williams-Ellis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

I AM homesick for Queen Victoria, who was a lady dead and buried before I was born. And I am just a little sickened by those modern Englanders who look back at her times smiling with as much condescension as contempt but who themselves, as ready to try any escape as they are unwilling to be bound by any obligation, are more concerned with self-pity than with empire. That may be why this tragedy of a young scientist who would make, but not be bound by, a contract selling his researches, takes me rather to impatience than to catharsis. I am weary of drama which depends upon the self-pity of self-indulgent people. To my way of thinking such folk need loud laughter rather than sentimental consideration. I was obviously, therefore, not one to enjoy this crowded story of English chemical-munitions-makers and their spiritually unraveled children.

Amabel Williams-Ellis, as the daughter of the Tory St. Loe Strachey, the sister of John Strachey, and the wife of Clough Williams-Ellis, certainly should know that social, political, and economic England about which she writes in this novel —which takes its climax from the secret shipments of English munitions, via Portugal, to France. That knowledge and an occasional seeing wit is revealed in her writing. She is as aware of nightclubs as of chemical laboratories, of labor meetings as of countryhouse conversations. She puts the strangely shocking English word bl--dy in the mouths of her workers. But over all is spread like butter on tea-time bread a sentimental concern for a rotting company of people. As a result, the book somehow seems almost a part of the self-pitying generation which it portrays. I may be insensitive about it but a happy ending, in which the young scientist looks forward to a new start in Java and to happiness with a lady still married to another gentleman and at the moment pregnant by that gentleman, was to me more ludicrous than moving.

Having said so much, I quickly add that I have no pat answer to those in England and elsewhere who whimper in books about the meaning of life. Even short of that, I wish I knew the meaning of the whimpering which has succeeded lustiness and laughter in England and too often on this side of the Atlantic as well. Only one thing I know: I prefer the beef-eaters to the belly-achers. I believe not only England but the world would be better off if the preference were more general in living and in literature.

E. H. YOUNG

An Artist in Living

CELIA. By E. H. Young. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

THIS is a novel of the type in which the English are particularly adept, the leisurely chronicle of family life in which action takes place entirely within the home, all the complications are psychological, and the end of endeavor is likely to be that beginning of wisdom which recognizes that a compromise with living is about the best that mankind can attain. Miss Young has sympathy, insight, and restraint. She is rigorously unsentimental in her handling of emotion, treating even passion when, rarely, she lets it enter her tale in muted manner. Her work has the defects of its virtues, for if it is always sensitive and subtle, it is rarely virile or moving.

The Celia who lends her name to the novel is a woman in early middle life, mother of a son and daughter who are delightfully alert and sensible young people, and wife of an architect whose undistinguished work supplies the family with comfortable, unluxurious living. Celia, who runs her house with as little attention to detail as possible, lives in two worlds,—that of actuality, and a second world of the imagination in which an early and unfulfilled love shapes her dreams. Miss Young describes with precision and judgment the round of Celia's days, projecting them all against the background of her heroine's relationship with her husband and love for another man.

The book flows along through a too great length effortlessly and agreeably with characters which, if they have little vigor, have a good deal of reality. It is a good novel in a quiet vein.

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Faulkner's South

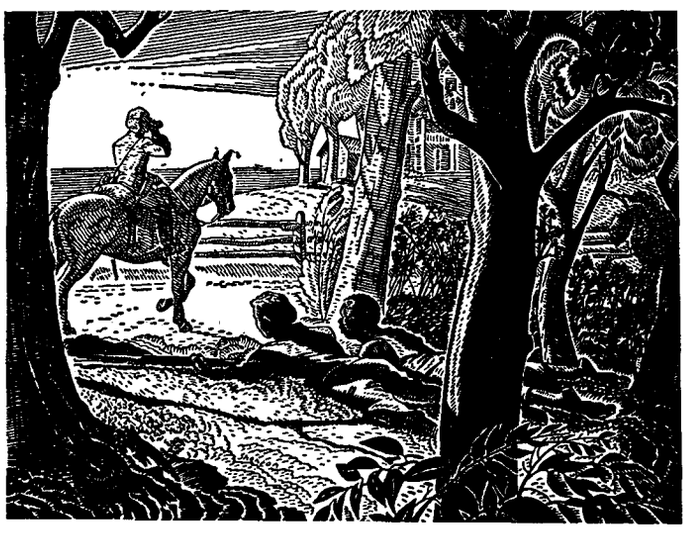
THE UNVANQUISHED. By William Faulkner. New York: Random House. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by BERNARD DEVOTO

MR. FAULKNER'S new book consists of seven short stories, six of which have been previously published in magazines. They are all related by Bayard Sartoris, grandfather of that Bayard who fought in the World War and a boy of fourteen in the first of them, when Vicksburg falls, a law student in the last one, when he has to go home to avenge the murder of his father, John Sartoris, the former Colonel, C. S. A., the former guerrilla chieftain, and (so I make out) the first victim of the curse that has pursued the Sartoris family through a large part of Mr. Faulkner's work. They are good stories, Grade A magazine fiction, rapid in movement, expertly carpentered. They are no more than magazine fiction: none is on the level of "That Evening Sun" and the other stories in the second section of "These Thirteen." On the other hand, none edges into the diabolism of "Doctor Martino," and only the last of them, "An Odor of Verbena," employs the supersaturated lachrymatory gas under high pressure that is Mr. Faulkner's most irritating medium.

They are straightforward and clear, as Mr. Faulkner usually is when writing about the Sartorises. The fact that you don't find out what happened in several stories till you have read the succeeding ones is an unimportant indirection compared to the elaborate devices employed to throw the reader off the track in, for instance, "The Sound and the Fury." They also avoid the ineffable and the unspeakable, and may be read by the tenderest schoolgirl, if there be tender schoolgirls. In fact Mr. Faulkner reaches a new high in purity by reviving the romantic fiction of the 1880's and giving us once more the highborn maiden who, having lost her fiancé to the Cause, cuts her hair, puts on a uniform, and preserves her maidenhood untouched, unthreatened, and even unslurred through over a year of riding with troops, guerrillas at that. To be sure her epicenity has ambiguous overtones not associated with the heroines of 1880, and she slacks off in the last story by making love to her stepson. Just what moves her to do so is concealed by Mr. Faulkner's customary rhetoric in such crises but it doesn't matter, for, when informed by his conscientious son, John Sartoris displays a Faulkner father's customary indifference to incest.

The widest interest of the stories is their relation to Mr. Faulkner's other work. As you had to wait for "These Thirteen" to get information vital to "Sartoris," so this book supplies important facts about the Sartoris family and other citizens of Jefferson, Mississippi, and dissipates some of the mystery that has lowered round the cores of "Light in August" and "Absalom, Absalom." The same policy is followed with *The Saturday Review* puzzles: if you can't work the Double-Crostic by yourself, you can always get the answer next week. Thus, John Sartoris's murder of the Burdens, which produces half the tangle of death and evil in "Light in August" but is not described there, occurs in "Skirmish at Sartoris," the sixth story of "The Unvanquished," and if you will now go back and read the earlier book you will know more about the unspeakable torment suffered by its heroine. New light is cast on Thomas Sutpen, the Beelzebub of "Absalom, Absalom," though the story of how he displaced John Sartoris in command of the regiment has not yet been told and probably awaits another volume. The murder of John Sartoris himself is committed in "An Odor of Verbena," and that clears up some small ambiguities in several books. There are some casual allusions to the Benbows and, I think, to the Comptons, and it becomes necessary to think of Miss Jenny, the finest character in "Sartoris," as rather older than she seemed. It is not yet clear whether Ringo, the Negro boy who grew up with Bayard, is his half-brother.



DRAWING BY EDWARD SHENTON
From "The Unvanquished."

But if "The Unvanquished" clears up a good many details, it does not tell us anything about the enveloping evil which is the principal medium of the other books. It is perverse of Mr. Faulkner (by the way, his name is still spelled with a *u* in this book) to remain on so comparatively trivial a level when he comes to write directly about the Civil War, for obviously he has always attributed the purulence of his contemporary South to the war and we were justified in expecting a much more fundamental examination. The stories do help to round out the picture which fiction is currently drawing of the Confederacy. The burying of the silver is pure cliché and it is pleasant to reflect that the magnanimous Union officer is acquiring the same status. The guerrilla activities are an important and too often suppressed detail in the picture, and there is a fine realism in the war experience of the women and children. But Mr. Faulkner only twice touches on profound war themes. There is a splendid scene of the Negroes stampeding to Sherman's army; and when Bayard Sartoris, a sixteen-year-old boy, pursues and kills the guerrilla who has murdered his grandmother, and then nails the corpse to a cabin door and sets up its amputated hand on his grandmother's grave, we are in the presence of one of the shadows which the war has thrown across the South of Mr. Faulkner's other work. It is part of the evil heritage that engulfs his contemporary characters but it is the only part treated in these stories, and there is nothing here to explain the fierce and masochistic heartbreak, the trumpets blowing yellowly in copper light, that the war means to impotent Southerners of the later books who had grandfathers in it. For a full understanding of the Faulkner South we need a statement of that heartbreak and its history. Perhaps the brief post-war career of John Sartoris in these stories supplies a clue which will be added to later.

The collection supports a remark I have already made in these columns, that Mr. Faulkner is most completely a serious novelist, in the best sense of that term, when he is working with the Sartorises, and that when he forsook them to chase his hideous banshees through the murk of hell he denied us both a fine comment on our own time in human rather than supernatural terms and much rich comedy as well. The humor that gleams all too infrequently in the other books briefly gleams here too, especially in the long fraud practised on the Union army by Bayard's Granny, Rosa Millard. Rosa perfects a system of stealing Yankee mules and reselling them to the army of invasion. Some of us would be willing to trade Mr. Faulkner's Eblis for more of that sort of thing.

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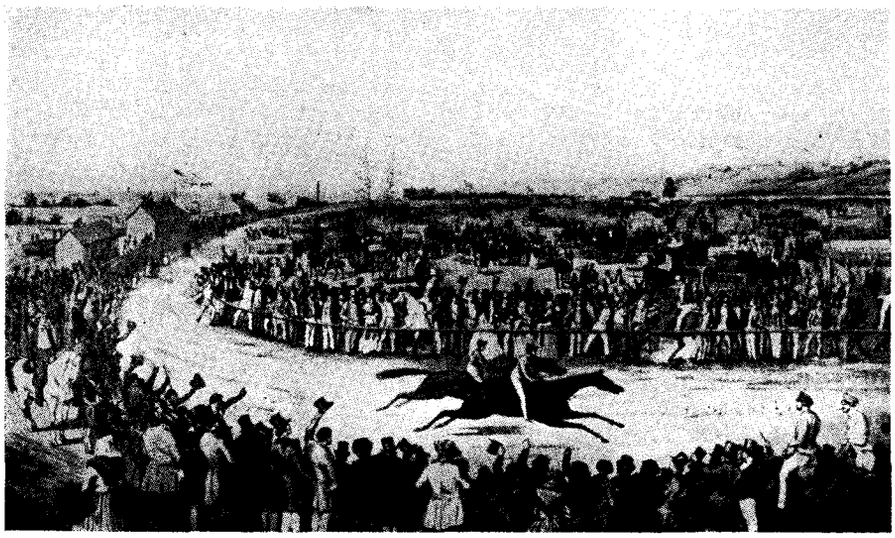

RACE TRACK SCENE IN MORRISSEY'S TIME
From a Currier and Ives print, reproduced in "Brandy for Heroes."

"Old Smoke"

BRANDY FOR HEROES. By Jack Kofoed. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by GEORGE BRITT

"OLD SMOKE" MORRISSEY has been forgotten in the sixty years since he died. But in his day he radiated the sort of human interest now belonging to Jack Dempsey, Tim Mara, and Sherman Billingsley of the Stork Club, together with splashes from being the friend and bitter foe of Tammany's Boss Tweed, a Wall Street plunger, Gold Rush '49er, eye-gouging brawler, and diamond in the rough.

These touches and many more he crowded into his forty-seven-year lifetime during New York City's rowdiest period. Look into the old *New York Herald* of May 2, 1878, the day after his death, and you'll find an obituary completely filling one page with a column more on the next, big pages set in small type, the excitement and rich anecdote completely justifying its lavish space.

"Brandy for Heroes" is the story of an Irishman, brought to Troy, N. Y., as an infant, forced by poverty to work in a wall paper factory at twelve, who rose in the world by virtue of his hard-slugging fists and ruthless ambition for money. At seventeen he was the bouncer in Troy's toughest house of prostitution. At eighteen he was deck-hand on a river boat, wooing the captain's daughter and already famous as a mug who could take it in gang fights in the metropolis. At nineteen he adventured to San Francisco, found gold in the gambling houses, and started his career as a bare-knuckled pre-Queensberry pugilist.

In politics he made his start as an election day thug and ballot box stuffer for the notorious Mayor Fernando Wood. Soon, his political connections were protecting his gambling houses, and he conducted the most ornate and expensive—perhaps the squarest—casinos in New York. In one game he won $120,000. The Robber Barons of Wall Street were his patrons and tipsters, and on that first great "Black Friday" in the street, he lost $800,000. If he had never known Commodore Vanderbilt, it is said, he would have become several times a millionaire. However, the Commodore was a material help when Morrissey was establishing racing at Saratoga, and the old Morrissey casino there is perhaps his only surviving monument.

The rich sporting man was Boss Tweed's pay-off man, and Tweed sent him to Congress. But he broke with Tweed, apparently in righteous disgust. Later he broke with Tweed's successor, "Honest John" Kelly, and in spite of Tammany opposition he won a triumphant campaign for the State Senate. The gift of popularity was his, and he had an appealing simplicity and integrity.

John Morrissey's life is enticing material for the chronicler to get his teeth in. I do not believe Mr. Kofoed has done so. The period remains merely flat and crude, without coming to life. The dramatic scenes seldom convey excitement. As a personality, Morrissey remains a stranger to the reader. As a record, the book lacks documentary reassurance. And the line on the jacket which speaks of the "swift newspaper style" will be taken by newspaper men, I believe, as an unjustified slur at the standards of their trade.

George Britt, editorial writer on the New York World-Telegram, *wrote the article on Westbrook Pegler which we published last summer.*

The Weimar Republic

GUSTAV STRESEMANN: His Diaries, Letters, and Papers. Vol. II. Edited and translated by Eric Sutton. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1938. $6.50.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

AFTER five years of Nazi dictatorship, in which the German landscape has been overshadowed by such extraordinarily dramatic figures as Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels, the name of Gustav Stresemann seems almost as remote as that of Bismarck or Frederick the Great. However troublous the postwar twenties may have seemed at the time, one recalls with a certain nostalgia—as ships are torpedoed, civilians massacred, and armies purged—the relative tranquillity of the Ruhr invasion, inflation, and the Rhineland occupation. It is yet too early to view this period in a proper perspective and to evaluate its now departed statesmen: Stresemann and Luther, Briand and Poincaré, Chamberlain and MacDonald. Probably very high rank will eventually be granted to Dr. Stresemann, who sought through parliamentary and diplomatic means to accomplish the German renaissance which Hitler has achieved in other ways.

Our understanding of the decline and fall of the Weimar republic is considerably enhanced by the publication of the second of three volumes dealing with the public life of Dr. Stresemann, who served for three months as Chancellor and six years as Foreign Minister. Translated and slightly abridged from the German edition which appeared in 1932-33, the first volume covers the years 1923-24 and the present volume runs from January, 1925, to September, 1926. This English edition of the Stresemann papers is welcome, for it fills in many of the gaps left by the available official documents, Lord D'Abernon's "An Ambassador of Peace," and such excellent secondary works as Wheeler-Bennett's "Information on the Problem of Security" and Toynbee's "Survey of International Affairs." Mr. Sutton has translated and arranged the material in admirable fashion, but many American readers will regret that he did not amplify his editorial explanation of the bewildering array of parties and politicians.

It is significant that the objectives of Stresemann in 1925 were virtually those of Hitler today: "contending against the aggressive policy of France"; "champion of the German minorities in Europe"; "revision of the Eastern frontier"; "colonial possessions"; and "union of German Austria with Germany." Even their methods are comparable, for Stresemann feared communism, desired friendship with Britain, and warned against "attempts to advance in every direction at once." Although Stresemann, Briand, and Chamberlain won jointly the Nobel peace prize for their collaboration in the pacifi-

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cation of Europe, this volume reveals the table-pounding behind closed doors which preceded their signatures on the Locarno pact. Stresemann's internationalism was grounded in an intense love of Germany and desire to regain its pre-war prestige. Both this collection of documents and "Mein Kampf" make clear that Germany's position as a great power must be accepted before Europe can attain stability.

Many of the factors, both domestic and foreign, which led to the triumph of National Socialism over the Weimar system are revealed in this book. Stresemann frequently laments the lack of national unity, the inexperience of the citizenry in democratic institutions, and the inability of politicians to place patriotism before party. Not only did the Reichstag contain extremists, both to Left and Right, who denied the validity of parliamentary government, but the cabinet was filled with cliques intriguing for power. The German National party constantly sought the downfall of Stresemann on the grounds of subservience to France, and even the Chancellor, Hans Luther, wavered in his support of the Foreign Minister. Most striking is the influence of foreign affairs upon the prestige of the government. Stresemann constantly protests the failure of Briand and Chamberlain, likewise weakened by conflicting and often recalcitrant opinion at home, to meet his demands quickly and effectively, thus giving him the victories necessary to preserve liberalism in Germany. Rapid evacuation of the Rhineland was the one concession which Stresemann required to preserve German self-respect; it came too late, as did almost every concession later made by Britain and France.

In following Stresemann's efforts to win both national unity and international prestige for Germany, one has the oppressive feeling of witnessing the first half of a familiar tragedy—Macbeth triumphant before his downfall, or Tristan and Isolde ecstatic before surprised by King Mark. In this unhappy drama the climax is the reconciliation of Germany and the Allies at Locarno and Geneva, with Herr Hitler still invisible in the wings, awaiting his cue for a last-act entrance. Monarchist but loyal to the republic, conservative but detested by the reactionaries, nationalist but determined on international appeasement, Dr. Stresemann plays his role with shrewdness, dignity, and sincerity, and approaches the heroic in his courage and perseverance. His finest lines, spoken on September 10, 1925, as he brought Germany into the League, deserve quotation both as an unconscious tribute to himself and as a criterion for contemporary statesmen: "The greatest benefactor of humanity is he who, rooted in his own people, develops what is in his soul and mind to its utmost significance, and thus, reaching out beyond the frontiers of his own people, has something to confer upon humanity as a whole. . . ."

Two Poets in Iceland

LETTERS FROM ICELAND. By W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice. New York: Random House. 1937. $3.

POEMS. By Louis MacNeice. New York: Random House. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

IT is extraordinary the way a certain group of young men, all radical, seem to have taken charge, by common consent, of English poetry. There are other young and original poets in England —like Laurence Whistler and Ruble Pitter —but first it was Auden-Spender, then Auden-Spender-Lewis, and now it is Auden-Spender-Lewis-MacNeice, with Rex Warner hovering in the background. I am glad to see MacNeice added, because he is a real poet. W. H. Auden, whose friends flaunt his singular first name, Wystan, as a guidon, has always been brilliant and uneven. He is often effective, but has made a hash of some of his writing, and has blundered about with language rather like a bull in a china shop. But he brought to radicalism the gusto of a small boy organizing a sham battle, and he still possesses an avid sense of life and interests himself enormously. He's done some good work too—make no mistake!—and strikes one as a likable and companionable fellow.

Owing to ancestral ties with Iceland, Icelandic fairy-stories read to him as a child, and various other reasons, he started off to explore a remote land—after having been in Spain before the Civil War started—and persuaded his Irish friend, MacNeice, to go along. Several publishers were also persuaded to finance them. I can't quite make out whether they stayed three months or six months. At any rate they compiled between them one of the oddest and most original (although too boyish for so staid a journal as *Life and Letters*) travel books of our time. In it Auden writes letters in rhyme-royal to Lord Byron, MacNeice pretends to be a certain terrible and hearty English girl Hetty, writing to her friend Nancy, both jointly sign their last will and testament, the most original one since François Villon's—packed with local gibes, only a few of which an American can understand (we gather that Auden doesn't care for Sir Oswald Mosley) a few quite stunning photographs and others more average, excerpts from a large and sometimes most amusing lot of old travel books, some excellent information for tourists, a general impression of horrible food and swell natives and lack of herbage and presence of whales and poor liquor, and the game, in general, not quite being worth the candle. But the book is entertainment—there's no doubt about that!

Louis MacNeice contributes in "Eclogue from Iceland," and "Epilogue" two real poems. These are in Mr. MacNeice's volume of collected poems, as well as the beautiful and haunting "Leaving Barra" and the uproarious yet bitter "Bagpipe Music."

> It's no go my honey love, it's no go my poppet;
> Work your hands from day to day, the winds will blow the profit.
> The glass is falling hour by hour, the glass will fall forever,
> But if you break the bloody glass you won't hold up the weather.

The "Eclogue by a Five-Barred Gate," "Nature Morte," and "The Glacier" may also be mentioned as highly successful poems, even though the last few lines of the first-mentioned might have been omitted. MacNeice has that strange and unanalyzable way of the dark Celt with him—just born to wield the pen. Mr. Auden is strenuous and engaging—and, after all, in his last book he did write that splendidly grim ballad about the soldiers coming. I say, more power to both their arms.

LEAVING HRAENSNEF: *from "Letters from Iceland."*

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Romans à Clef (2)

EVERYONE who ever wrote a novel has interested at least his friends, who have usually found themselves portrayed in it. They have no difficulty identifying the characters. Reginald Fortescue, the melancholy hero, is old Dick himself, the novelist putting his best foot forward; Millard Strang, the coarse person whose stupidity at last leads him to disaster, is Dick's old roommate, who has never treated him with proper solemnity and once took a girl away from him; and in the beautiful but ultimately inadequate transports of Sally Meredith, the green-eyed girl who loves Reginald but cannot hold him, we at last get the low-down on what happened between Dick and Mary Smith during that summer on the Maine coast. Not only the principals are transparent to the novelist's friends: the most casual characters are also from personal history and many of the incidents occurred in the presence of people now easily persuaded to testify, though it was clever of Dick to dress them up with such dash and verve.

And not only friends have this perceptiveness. Every novel that reaches a public of a few thousand is sure to bring its author letters from strangers who are able to identify themselves in the characters and have been eyewitnesses of events which the author had, up to that moment, supposed original with him and wholly imaginary. Even casual magazine stories frequently produce a sheaf of letters, each one inquiring how the author knew so much about the writer of the letter. (Here, the sad truth is, the letters are likely to be exclusively from women, to wonder "how you could understand my most private dreams," and to conclude that some mysterious destiny makes soul speak to soul across the night and must inevitably lead to an unphrased but easily predictable end.)

This kind of conviction is considerably increased when a novel has a really widespread popularity. When "The Green Hat" was flourishing, it was an open secret that at least a dozen different young Englishwomen had been described to the smallest detail in the character of Iris March. The true identity of Lady Brett in "The Sun Also Rises" is an even more open secret, and of the numerous identifications that exist in literary folklore, several have got as far as print. Such multiplicity is inevitable. Most of old Dick's women friends will recognize themselves in the green-eyed Sally Meredith, and those who happen to have brown eyes will merely attribute the alteration to Dick's chivalry. They will find more evidence to support their belief as time goes on—as it is likely that a search of old family documents will eventually show that Scarlett O'Hara had a number of originals within a hundred-mile radius of Atlanta and others who were transported there from as far away as Charleston, Richmond, and even Portland, Maine.

Sometimes, however, the evidence for such identifications is more than folklore and the private wishes of those who make them. Mr. Cabell's John Charteris, who carefully saved the love letters that women had written him, is not altogether unknown among novelists, and most of us must have seen John Charteris or another immensely enjoying an act of retaliation or revenge in fiction. Mr. Somerset Maugham has gone into court and complained on his oath that a certain character in a novel which he named was intended to be a malicious portrait of him. There have been other suits of the same kind, and for every one that reaches court action, several more must be compromised. In such novels there are characters which can be more or less readily proved to be deliberate portraits of actual people. There are many more novels in which the portraiture cannot be proved but must be accepted as deliberate by even the most skeptical. The belief, for instance, that at least one character in Mr. Maugham's "Cakes and Ale" is a portrait intended to be recognized could not be proved, but a good many intelligent and informed people hold it. And every year novels are published, especially novels which deal with official life and with characters supposed to live in the public gaze, which are accepted, more or less generally, as *romans à clef*.

But obviously we are dealing with two different things. There is a kind of novel which is deliberately written "from the life" and which is intended to convince the reader that some of its characters have actual, living originals. And there is a kind of novel in which the characters are intended to be, as the publishers' note following the title page asserts, "wholly fictional and imaginary." Now our old friend Dick's novel, in which the green-eyed Sally Meredith is privately identified as herself by every woman whom Dick ever kissed at a country club dance, belongs to the second kind. Dick's assertion, and his sincere belief, is that he took nothing from life, neither incident nor character, but instead made them up (out of an artist's knowledge of psychology and events) to suit the needs of his novel and the purposes he was serving with it. He would regard it not only as dishonorable to draw from the life, but as unnecessary as well. He is not a copyist, he is a creator. He works not with factual material but with his imagination. There may be novelists so little creative that they have to use mere facts, but you may be quite sure that Dick is not one of them. . . . But his private friends go on interpreting every new book of his as a *roman à clef*.

If you question Dick closely, however, he will modify his assertions. Why, yes, it is true that some of the minor action is carried over from what Dick read in a newspaper or what happened to him long ago. There is an amusing little scene on page 120, inserted between two big scenes for the merely technical purpose of delaying the action. He was pressed for time when he came to write it and, his mind occupied with the big scene to come, he found that the shortest way out was just to describe an idiotic drunken debate he and Millard Strang once had in a speakeasy before Repeal. Moreover, it is true that some of the unimportant characters who casually enter the novel for a few pages are almost literal reproductions. Dick's Aunt Edith, for instance, appears in a scene or two, primarily for comic effect, and there are a few others like her. They were so unimportant and the functions they served were so limited and momentary that he didn't bother to create. But the important characters and the main continuing action of the novel are altogether imaginary. They are the real stuff of the novel, the core of the novelist's effort, his true creativeness. To believe that they correspond to anything actual is, Dick says, to deny that he is a novelist at all, for it amounts to an assertion that he is uncreative.

We come to a central and continuing occupation of criticism: what is the imagination? what is creativeness? how is fiction germinated? But though criticism is forever discussing the problem, it has said singularly little about it that is helpful. The scholars whom we mentioned last week tend, ultimately, to deny that there is any such thing as creativeness, which is absurd; the metaphysicians tend, ultimately, to accept it as an absolute to be admired but not explored, which is mystical. Let us adopt a mere working hypothesis and see whither it leads: our old friend Dick is an extremely original and inventive novelist on the conscious level but, on the unconscious level, every book he writes is a *roman à clef*. The eight different friends of his who saw themselves in Sally Meredith were justified, for they were all there. The fifty thousand strangers who saw themselves in Sally were also justified and were paying a high tribute to the part of his talent which it is least common but most intelligent to call original.

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Letters to the Editor: *Crusaders for Constance Holme*

Captivated

SIR:—Quercus's remark in *Trade Winds* (*SRL*, January 22) "We are still hunting for someone who has actually read some of Constance Holme's novels," is the occasion of this letter.

So have I been hunting, ever since taking a chance a year or more ago on the recommendation of the Oxonian and ordering one of them in the Oxford World's Classics Series. Since then I have bought, read, and loaned them all; have crusaded among my friends until now there are some eight or ten of our faculty who have been captivated; first by "He-Who-Came?," and led from that to the other seven. All eight of the novels are now in our Stephens College library and have quite a circulation among the students due to the fact that two of my converts are teachers of literature and have put them on their recommended reading list.

But what I want to know is, why doesn't anybody know anything about Constance Holme? I have a great many friends who read rather widely and have yet to discover anyone who had ever heard of her. Something should be done about it. For not knowing about her, many are poorer than they need to be.

GRACE PEPPERDINE,
Secretary to the President.
Stephens College,
Columbia, Missouri.

Three Down, Five to Go

SIR:—I've read three of Constance Holme's novels: "The Splendid Fairing," "The Lonely Plough," and "The Things Which Belong." And I'm looking for time to read the rest, as well as own them.

And Paul Jordan-Smith mentions her almost every time he speaks or writes!

MARY K. LAWSON.
Alhambra, Cal.

Elusive

SIR:—Search no longer; here is an ardent admirer of Constance Holme. I have read "Beautiful End" and "The Splendid Fairing," which I own (Oxford World Classics), and "The Lonely Plow."

Are lovers of this sensitive and shy author really so few; or, like the author, only elusive and modest?

D. M. GOODFELLOW.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

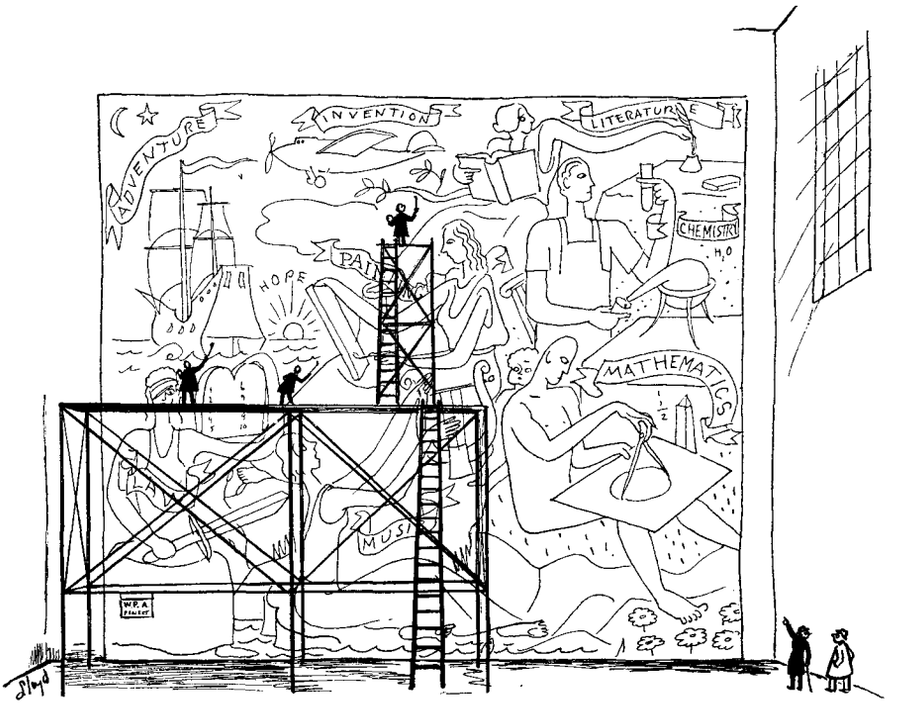
Took Notice

SIR:—In reply to your question concerning Constance Holme's readers, I am writing to say you need look no further.

Intrigued by a paragraph in the Amen Corner in October, 1935, to the effect that another of Constance Holme's books had been added to the World's Classics, and that she was indubitably the most important living author of English prose fiction, I sat up and took notice, as I have been conducting a seminar course in fiction for some years and had never heard of her.

I found that we had "The Splendid Fairing" in this library, and read it, with the result that I ordered for myself all her titles in the World's Classics, sent them as Christmas presents to my most discriminating friends, and put her into the course that winter.

JOSEPHINE ADAMS RATHBONE,
Vice-Director.
School of Library Science,
Pratt Institute,
Brooklyn, N. Y.



"THERE! THAT'S THE SORT OF THING I WANT FOR MY BOOKPLATE!"

Gifts to Discriminating Friends

SIR:—Please allow me to introduce myself as one person who has read several of Constance Holme's novels. I have also given copies of her "Beautiful End" as gifts to discriminating friends.

MABEL POWELL, *Librarian.*
Lake Forest College,
Lake Forest, Ill.

Live and Grow

SIR:—I desire to present one insignificant person who, finding the first one good, read four of Constance Holme's stories running,—all she could obtain in the county library. I believe they were extensively read (by at least three people) on my recommendation while in the Hueneme branch. I filed an "Oxonian" ad from the *SRL* of March 10, '34, but did not obtain the books until a year or two ago when I was looking up material on Spain. "The Old Road from Spain" was on that account the first one I read, followed by "The Trumpet in the Dust," "Crump Folk Going Home," and "The Splendid Fairing." I found them all fascinating pictures of the life and trend of thought of the people of the west of England.

While Miss Holme writes of a locality and its history, and of ideas and customs that no doubt are slowly passing away even there, the human quality of her characters is timeless. The artistry of her novels, the plot and structure, are also notable. I think they should live and grow in popularity.

LILLIAN HOKIN.
Hueneme, Cal.

Pure Prose Poetry

SIR:—In this little town (pop. circa 5,000) there is not only one admirer and reader of Constance Holme (myself) who indulges in the extravagance of buying her first editions, but several other "fans," who think, as I do, that her works are something extraordinary—pure prose poetry, of a beauty so great it almost hurts.

SARA B. FIELD.
Longmeadow, Mass.

Read Seven

SIR:—A week end by the sea gives me leisure to inform you, if it really is of interest to you, that I have read seven of Constance Holme's novels—lured on from one to the next. I can, also, provide you with the names and addresses of several other people who have done likewise. Indeed one individual, after borrowing my copies, invested in a set.

Be that as it may, have you forgotten asking this same question in 1934? I did not reply then but one Dorothea B. Hoover of Joplin, Mo., did. See April 7, 1934, number.

ELIZABETH WOOD.
Atlantic City, N. J.

Read Eight

SIR:—You may cease "hunting" but I hope you will continue to speak a good word for Constance Holme.

I own and have read all her eight vol-

(*Continued on page* 18)

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Watch Out for Mr. O'Hara

BY WOLCOTT GIBBS

IN APRIL, 1929, John O'Hara began to report the meetings of the Orange County Afternoon Delphian Society for *The New Yorker*. This series, dealing with the ruthless determination of the club-ladies to make the cultural life in their little community a finer, braver thing, was purely an exercise in dialect. Unlike Sinclair Lewis, who has never hesitated to heighten or distort the idiom to suit his literary purposes, Mr. O'Hara reported almost exactly what he heard. Such austerity, though impressive, had its drawbacks from an editorial point of view. The first two or three of his pieces filled the reader with admiration for the beautiful precision of Mr. O'Hara's ear; from the fourth on, however, the sensation was uncomfortably like being actually trapped among the ladies while they talked. Mr. O'Hara's reporting was close to perfection, but cumulatively it may have been a little depressing. Jed Harris, who has a marked talent for omniscience after the fact, told me recently that he was no more than halfway through the first of the Delphian stories when he realized that an astonishing new talent had appeared in American letters.

"I knew that he was the greatest natural playwright in America," said Mr. Harris with what for him amounts to icy detachment.

JOHN O'HARA

It was intelligent of Mr. Harris to deduce so much from such fragmentary evidence, but on the whole it was an isolated reaction. The Delphians, and a series about the employees of a paint company which alternated with them, were a success among such serious students of the idiom as F. P. A. to whose "Conning Tower" Mr. O'Hara had been a frequent and valuable contributor. For the casual reader, however, they were art in too pure a form, and apparently affected him with the same respectful apathy he might have felt if given a portfolio of perfect lithographs of Brooklyn Bridge.

Mr. O'Hara knew this as well as anybody else. He was, in fact, bored to madness with the Delphians long before he got through with them, and continued to write about them only when he needed money which, in those precarious days, was practically all the time. Even while he was turning out Delphians as briskly as a doughnut machine, he was meditating the next step, and presently a different kind of story began to appear. These were very short stories in form, but the treatment was novel and often puzzling. Some of them seemed to have been written for the sole purpose of putting into print some dislocation of the language that had come to haunt their writer; others were cryptic, the end of the story concealed in what seemed to be a gratuitously irrelevant sentence (it was not unusual for the troubled editors to turn up with three contradictory ideas about what Mr. O'Hara was getting at); some of them were startlingly good.

In their technical aspect, as an example of a strongly original talent, advancing painstakingly through trial and error, they were all interesting and frequently exciting. Unfortunately not many of them could be printed in a magazine whose readers had no especial interest in experimental prose, and consequently these were rather thin days for the author. Gradually, however, the stories acquired substance and discipline and Mr. O'Hara lost much, though by no means all, of his earlier passion for indirection. One recent story, for instance, ended with its protagonist leaving the room with the bow on his hat on the wrong side of his head, and, while it was abundantly clear to Mr. O'Hara that this indicated great spiritual turmoil, it conveyed precisely nothing to many readers, who wrote in, irritably. On the whole, though, he wrote a great deal less, but far more successfully, and nine times out of ten these days he accomplishes exactly what he intended to do. When he does, the result is worth any amount of earlier pain. In fact, two of his later stories in *The New Yorker*, "In the Morning Sun" and "Over the River and Through the Wood," and the title piece in "The Doctor's Son," seemed to me as honestly moving and as brilliantly executed as anything of their genre, while "Appointment in Samarra" proved that he was capable of sustaining these qualities throughout a novel. In spite of the publisher's blurb on his new book, "Hope of Heaven," which with a sure instinct for the original phrase speaks of his "meteoric rise," none of this has been easy or especially swift, and his private desperation I know has often been about as much as he could bear.

John O'Hara came into my life, with some of the accumulating violence of a hurricane, some time in 1928. That, of course, was during the middle years of prohibition, and I saw him mostly in the speakeasies in the Fifties—Matt Winkel's, Tony's, Mino's, Michel's, "21," and many others, gone and forgotten. It was a queer time—the fact that everybody was part of the same general conspiracy against a silly law broke down many barriers so that it was hard to tell what might happen before any night was over—and the things I remember about it are queer. I recall John complaining in a puzzled way because a lady had taken away his coat and mandolin—God knows what he was doing with a mandolin—and given them to her janitor. And there was the time *The New Yorker* sent him up in an airplane to fly over the city and then write a story about it. It turned out that John, nervous about airsickness, had taken sensible precautions against it, so that when he came down, he was in a state of mild confusion, and when the plane started to taxi away across the landing field, he somehow got the impression that there was no pilot in it and broke a window with the heroic intention of climbing in and shutting off the motor before somebody got hurt. There was also the odd affair of the cheese-knives. This was when John, grimly determined to assassinate a man who had brought him to the end of his negligible patience, secured for the purpose a long, deadly blade from the free-lunch counter. Alert friends, however, took the knife away, and in a little while everybody in the bar, including John and the potential corpse, wandered off amiably to Child's for a cup of coffee. Everything went quietly until they got up to go, when a second and totally unsuspected cheese-knife fell from somewhere onto the floor. John, it appeared, had simply decided to be prepared in case any further unpleas-

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antness came up. Finally there was the Italian voice, inexplicable but menacing, which at exactly four o'clock every afternoon for about a week, came over the telephone in his hotel room.

"All right, O'Hara," it would say softly, darkly. "Just watch out, that's all."

This horrible warning so unnerved him at last that he fled by night to another hotel, changing from one taxi to another on the way as adroitly as any Pinkerton. The voice desisted, but it was never explained and he still thinks about it a little uneasily from time to time.

While these odd things went on, I was gradually coming to learn a little about his earlier life, which was rather like one of those capsule biographies of the author that sometimes appear on the jackets of detective stories—a succession of unrelated and mildly implausible occupations. His father was a doctor in Pottsville, Pa., where John was born in January, 1905. He had five brothers and two sisters, all younger than he. He went to Fordham Prep, The Keystone State Normal School, and Niagara Preparatory School, and was fired from all of them. After that, a college career seemed more or less impracticable, so he went to work. He was an evaluating engineer (whatever that may be), a steward on a boat, the secretary in a briquetting plant, a call-boy and freight clerk on the Pennsylvania Railroad, a soda jerker, a reader of gas meters, a guard in an amusement park, a laborer in a steel mill, a press agent for the moving pictures, and a secretary to Heywood Broun who was at the moment toying with philanthropy. Off and on, during the same period, he worked as a reporter, rewrite man, motion picture critic, religious editor, and sports writer on such various publications as *The Pottsville Journal*, *The Tamaqua* (Pa.) *Courier*, *Time*, *Editor & Publisher*, *The Mirror*, *The Morning Telegraph*, *The Herald-Tribune*, and the *Pittsburgh Bulletin-Index* of which, for a short space of glory, he was editor-in-chief. All these careers were fairly brief. In addition to the fact that he was agreeably disposed to drink anything with anybody at any time at all, he had a strong distaste for sunlight and preferred to stay in bed until the worst of it was over. Henry Robinson Luce, brilliant young assassin of the mother tongue, fired him from *Time* with the virtuous comment that the Luce publications had no use for a man who lolled in bed after nine o'clock in the morning, and that was the general complaint against him for he was unquestionably an able reporter. He went out to Hollywood twice and loathed it, although he never degraded himself by writing a script for them. His image, however, was preserved for posterity when he appeared for a split second as a reporter in a film called "The General Died at Dawn."

John's domestic life, during the years I saw most of him, was also haphazard. He moved frequently and abruptly, and

JOHN O'HARA, PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE STORK CLUB

each place, even while he still lived in it, had an air of having been hastily abandoned in the face of a tornado. The laundry collected on the floor of the closet until there were no more clean things to put on, and at least twice I remember that he was driven to the unfashionable extremity of wearing a dress shirt in the daytime; the ghosts of old meals haunted the sink; the bed was usually unmade because of the circumstance that Mr. O'Hara was still in it. During his first marriage, which dissolved amiably after two years, there was a measure of order, but on the whole he was as disorganized and impermanent as a magpie. His social life was much the same. Making a date to have lunch with John was a risk only to be undertaken by a desperate gambler. Usually half past one came, or even two, and with it a telephone call and John's voice, scratchy with sleep, explaining he'd just waked up, and would be along as soon as he'd been able to put himself together. On the other hand, he was more than likely to telephone or even appear in person at four o'clock in the morning with a cheerful suggestion that it seemed the best possible time to go out somewhere and get a bite to eat.

Last December he married again, and there are indications that this will mean another revision of his life, in the direction of quiet and order. The most arresting symptom of what may be expected to come is the fact that for the first time his name appears in the "Social Register," a volume for which he once professed an unrelenting hostility. He regarded it and its clients so bitterly indeed that once when a friend, who also wrote, turned up unexpectedly in its pages, he received the news with melancholy scorn.

"The poor bastard is through," he said. "He's got himself in the 'Social Register.'"

There has been, I suppose, a certain amount of nervous strain connected with knowing John, but nevertheless it has been an experience that I value. He reacts to criticism as violently and irrationally as a bull in the arena. I remember once hearing him stripping a critic not only of professional honor but also of private virtue, equipping him in fact with a past that would have fascinated the Jukes family. Did he actually know these things?

"Well, no," he said in what he must have imagined was a reasonable manner, "but the damn fool didn't like my book."

On the other hand, he is obstinately loyal to his friends, and insists upon seeing virtues and talents in them which they would be the first to disclaim. He is, for instance, convinced that I am a formidable authority on poetry and, although my knowledge doesn't go much beyond the number of lines in a sonnet, he will probably have that impression till he dies.

He is, I think, preoccupied with a great many things that are trivial and not easy to reconcile with a mind that is adult enough in other respects. The fact that he didn't go to college, for instance, seems to me to have led him to invest those missing years with a warmth and wonder that they could never possibly have had. F. Scott Fitzgerald's "This Side of Paradise" has been a sort of textbook for him, to be reread at intervals, and he is more exhaustively informed on college clubs, traditions, and mores in general than all but the exceptional alumnus. Even his clothes—soft white shirts with the collars buttoned down at the corners, and loose, high-buttoned suits on the celebrated old Brooks Brothers model,—belong to that lost though voluble generation. His books often recite long catalogues of high-class gents' haberdashery. On the other hand again, he is inclined

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to underestimate his remarkable knowledge of far more vital and important things—the broken and inconsecutive rhythms of living speech, the shrewd detail (over and over again in his work) that suggests the whole.

Focussing intensely on people, their physical surroundings and actual conduct, he is, I think, too biassed emotionally and too impatient with anything except the taut realism that he admires (to him Hemingway is still the greatest American writer though given to chasing dubious goddesses) to be an especially good critic. When he talks about the things he knows from his own peculiar experience, however, he can talk as well as his best writing. He never forgets anything he sees or hears, and in telling you about it, he is remarkably graphic, almost disastrously acute. He can also be as funny as anybody I know, though somewhat inclined to be scurrilous.

It is conventional, in ending such fugitive biographies as this, to speculate cautiously about what the future holds for the victim. In Mr. O'Hara's case, this is a difficult assignment; as difficult as it would be for me to explain his occasional and apparently gratuitous physiological references which are denounced with so strange a mixture of shock and rapture by the lady patrons of the lending libraries. It is necessary, in fact, to approach him in a singularly glum and calvinistic spirit, very depressing to the reader and certainly maddening to Mr. O'Hara himself, because he is essentially a moral problem, there being no question of his brilliant technical equipment and sheer ability as a story-teller.

If he should decide (as a great many critics seemed to feel he did in "Butterfield 8") to write skillful, rather melodramatic novels about people whose inevitable tragedies take place in a moral vacuum and are therefore not tragic or moving in any final sense, he will still be successful, but it won't be what his friends want from him, and I'm sure it won't be what he wants for himself either. If, on the other hand, he can contrive to write about the things he authentically hates—waste and hypocrisy and the sadness of potentially valuable lives failing, but not without some dignity, because they were not born quite strong enough for the circumstances they had to meet—and if he can write about them with the honesty and understanding which he possesses in as great a measure as anyone writing today, then he will certainly be one of our most important novelists. For my part I have every confidence that that is what is going to happen to him. It might even be that in the end he will write about someone *not* ruthlessly preordained to defeat, although that is probably asking too much of any young novelist in these disjointed times.

Wolcott Gibbs, who has been for several years on the editorial staff of The New Yorker, *is the author of "Bed of Neuroses."*

Introducing Iraq

BAGHDAD SKETCHES. By Freya Stark. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by COURTLANDT CANBY

IN discussing this book one is inclined to talk of the elusive and modest author rather than of her work. What gives her writing its peculiar charm and distinction is her own level sight, her skillful presentation of the material, the nice balance between interpretation and information, romanticism and common sense, observation and emotion, which is in all her work. She not only produces travel books, she presents as well admirable literature. Good writing is, after all, only the best and most pleasing way of serving up one's material; therefore Miss Stark's books are among the best of travel literature. She introduces us to Iraq in this book as well as anybody could, but she would write as competently on any subject in which she happened to be interested. The Near East is lucky to have her.

This, her third important book on this part of the world, is a series of sketches, some contributed originally to that journalistic oasis, the *Baghdad Times,* some written later, but all of them bound together in a surprising unity, a unity due again to the personality of the author. The title is misleading. A great part of Iraq, and also the little state of Kuwait on the Persian Gulf, come to life in the course of Miss Stark's apparently casual wanderings and observations. But casualness, ease, is merely one of the qualities of Miss Stark's beautiful writing, which gives us a realistic yet loving picture of the people, both the nationalistic young *effendis* with their "modern" ideas, and those who still follow the older traditions of the East. Few Europeans have a better understanding of the problem created by the crushing force of Western culture on the old East than Miss Stark, and few writers have treated it with a better understanding of both points of view, with a more delicate perception of the havoc raised by it among the common people even in their daily life.

In emphasizing this aspect of her work I am trying to show that this is more than just another travel book. Yet as good travel literature it stands with the best. Miss Stark writes of the *Yezidi* devil worshippers of the North; of the conservative, strange, immemorial city of Baghdad; of the sacred shrines of the Shi'a Mohammedans, Kerbela, Nejf, Kadhimain (the modestly intrepid author entered the latter in disguise); and finally of the hospitable beduins of the desert who still lead the truly simple life. She writes of these things with a deep understanding, and with passages of telling beauty. Miss Stark's work should be a model for all writers of travel literature. And her photographs are admirable.

Courtlandt Canby accompanied an archeological expedition to Persia last year.

SALIH THE BOATMAN: *from "Baghdad Sketches."*

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

Creative Writing

OF the various ways of helping oneself through college, it was thought that Otto Mundelein had invented the most ingenious. It is well known that students—once the first freshman homesickness is past—don't write home as they should. The Old Man, of course, rarely hears anything except when a check is urgently required. Mother is lucky if she gets a note maybe once a month; and how little it satisfies her fond solicitude. Is young Lochinvar eating sensible meals, are his laundry and mending taken care of, does he sleep sound, speak up boldly in recitation, get regular exercise, who are his friends, what does he do week-ends, is he reading anything beyond the candid camera weeklies???????? These eight question marks at least, and probably plenty more, pullulate in the maternal skull. They crackle there like curls of bacon frying in a skillet.

No philosopher (from Spinoza to Spengler; or is it Pareto who is fashionable nowadays?) has ever yet written the piece the world needs on the incessant activity of that matriarchal skull. It flickers inside with an incessant conceptual news-reel of what Junior and Jocunda are up to. The Feature Picture is always on. A true bill of pelliculars of what happens inside that small but vivid cavity is beyond the solemn analysts. But you may be quite sure that young Lochinvar plays the lead. He was never topped by anyone except, for just a few days, the Duke of Windsor.

Otto had this all figured out. He invented the LETTERS HOME SERVICE. For a dollar a term he would undertake for his college mates the tedious job of writing regular (and cheerful) letters telling the folks how things were going. And in the first person, without danger of detected fraud. All the student subscriber had to do was fill out Otto's questionnaire giving a little intimate dope, sign his name at the bottom of several sheets of college notepaper, and pay his fee. Otto did the rest, including postage.

Otto guaranteed his client a letter home once a fortnight. It was thought better not to write too often, to avoid repetition. His customers soon ran over a hundred, and he had to engage an assistant. All day Sunday was spent in typing these ghost-written filial messages. The business was doing so well that Home Letters Service planned next year to extend its labor-saving enterprise among the more frolicsome co-eds, even if this involved, for literary verisimilitude, hiring a discreet female editor.

Otto did his work with caution and conscience. His busy assistant was supposed to circulate as much as possible among the customers, to get any current personal news. This was duly entered on the dope-sheets. Careful study of the varsity daily also provided additional items. Of course, as in any pioneer industry, mistakes were made: for instance one client cancelled on account of an unexpected embarrassment. His letter home innocently said "I'm going to make Baby Dutch lie down and beg for mercy if it takes me all winter." His parents supposed that Baby Dutch was some damsel from across the tracks.

After this Otto did all the actual letter writing himself. Examine a typical dope-sheet as filled in by the light-hearted client, and then see what Letter Service could do with it as a Sunday evening report to the home circle. [*See below.*]

From this jejune material the industrious Otto was able to compile a good half dozen affectionate missives, of which here is a fair sample:—

Dear People:—

I guess it's time for another newsy letter from yours truly. This has been a busy week, had a Chaucer quiz and pretty tough, but Dr. Herringbone's course in Medieval History helps. What cards those Canterbury commuters were, mostly knaves and jokers. After the Drama Club show, Beer & Buskin had a symposium at which George and Bill were my guests. This was hard on the old allowance; also I've got to do something for Sadie and Emmeline pretty soon. Speaking of the girls, I'm still grinding on the Decay of the Couplet since Pope. One of the Profs says Pope's physical troubles were probably due to his teeth, has Aunt Osprey been to the dentist lately? Health good here, been getting fat, I don't believe the old tux will see me through the Jr Prom.

Alpha Zeug is a swell place to be, the boys all very studious and we have a good laundress. Seen any good pictures lately? I haven't gone much, had to be careful of the exchequer. Well, I thought you'd like to know everything is jake, now I must get some material for tomorrow's assignment in Creative Writing, which comes easy to me. Speaking of Pope, I had a swell hunch for my paper. He was born 1688, died 1744, no wonder he was smart at couplets. Tell Dad to write. Love from

PRIMJOHN.

Otto, as you notice, was not lacking a touch of mild humor here and there. It amused him to spend his Sundays turning off fifty or sixty bulletins on this general scheme, and he often wondered about the unknown people whose names wove like a pattern through his standardized copy. It pleased his sense of human continuity when he learned in some

HOME LETTER DOPE SHEET

Name and Address of Parents...	*Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Asphodel, 101 Anxiety St., Solicitude, N. J.*
Student's Name and Class.....	*John Primrose Asphodel, '39*
Nickname at Home.....	*"Primjohn"*
Student's Address	*c/o Alpha Zeugma*
Course	*Arts*
Favorite Prof & Class.....	*Dr. Herringbone, Medieval Hist.*
Majoring in	*English*
Tough Courses	*Chaucer; Hist. of Criticism*
Snap Courses	*Creative Writing; Musicology; Age of Anne*
Activities, Clubs	*Drama Club; Beer & Buskin.*
Amusements	*Movies, Poker, Bowling. (Lay off poker)*
Special Friends to be Mentioned..	*George; Bill; Sadie & Emmeline (twins)*
Allusions to Family.....	*Aunt Osprey, wealthy, keep on her good side, has sciatica.*
Any Special News.....	*Am writing term-paper on Decline of the Couplet since Pope*
Church Attendance	*Presbyterian, but be careful here*
Progress in Studies.....	*Not so hot. Be optimistic*
Need Money?	*Definitely. Must have $25 extra before Junior Prom.*
Condition of Wardrobe.....	*Terrible. Keep hammering on old Tuxedo too small*
Allusions to Health, Dentist, &c...	*Under Control*
Suggestions, if H. L. S. runs short of dope.....	*Play up value of social contacts, etc. Don't call the Old Man "Pop," it gets his goat.*

N.B. Subscribers are assured, letters will be written with caution; no allusions that might cause trouble or confusion. If any change of circumstances notify the Service *at once.*

☞Sign your usual family nickname at foot of attached sheets.

HOME LETTER SERVICE,
per O. K. Mundelein,
1616 Mandrake Hall.

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history seminar that students in the Middle Ages had devised a similar plan for correspondence by proxy.

But Otto had work of his own to pursue, and his final exams drew near. His graduating thesis on Nonce-Words in Middle High Shetland involved long, arduous afternoons in the university library; with the added grievance that after having undertaken this subject to please an enthusiastic prof (known as the Trained Norse) he found Middle High Shetland very meagre in Nonce-Words, whatever those may be. Wallowing in Shetland dictionaries he unavoidably neglected to check up on some of the Home Letter subscribers; and his assistant went to the infirmary with mumps and could give no help.

One Sunday toward the end of the term Otto was desperately struggling to get through arrears. He was a kindly soul, and liked to give the families as cheerful news as possible. If his clients did not inform him of any vital change of condition, he assumed that all was for the best, and said so. Also, at this time of year he had pretty well used up the variations on what information he had. With towel round his forehead and mist on spectacles, fiercely conning the dope-sheets for scraps of unused suggestion, he wrote the letter that caused Mr. Edgar Asphodel to transfer his only son to the family business in foundation garments:—

Dear People:—
Well, as the year draws to a close you'll want some more news. Everything's hunkydory but don't forget I've *got* to get that new tux. Doc Herringbone is much pleased with my research in Couplets. I ought to dedicate it to Sadie and Emmeline, ha ha. George, Bill, and the girls, are going on a week-end hike but I declined as I have too much studying on hand. Give my love to Aunt Osprey. Alpha Zeug has its house party next week, which involves an assessment all round, even if I pass it up to finish my thesis. I'd like to have a good talk with you, whether you think social contacts in college are more important than study. However there's a lot of work to be done so this letter must close.
Much love,
PRIMJOHN.

Unfortunately, as an example of two-way stretch, in the same mail Mr. Asphodel received an official note from the Dean of Arts. "I regret to inform you," it said, "that your son has consistently neglected his studies all this term. His recitation grades do not permit of his entering for the spring examinations. We are reluctantly compelled to mark him conditioned in the following courses:—

Chaucer 3a
History of Criticism 28
Creative Writing 16b
Age of Anne 24
Musicology 6

"Unless these conditions are worked off in September, he will be ineligible to rejoin his class next year.

"Further I regret to inform that there is on its way to you a communication from the Dean of Women which will require your immediate attention."

It was certainly a pity that subsequent publicity, when the university daily got hold of it—and on Alumni Day, too—blew up the Home Letter Service. It was a good idea, and kept a lot of parents happy and satisfied. Except Mr. and Mrs. Mundelein, who rarely heard from Otto.

From a Childhood

By C. F. MACINTYRE

. . . and often when the sunlight through the window
made a gold square with atomies of dust
and left a quiet blackness on the floor,
he would steal in and stand beside her chair,
watching the roadway; for she loved to wait
for one black figure coming against the sun,
a shadow growing till the sun went out
(or so she thought) before the very blackness
of this one coming, who was radiance.

This time, of all the day, was not his own,
and she seemed something alien sitting there:
Something of strange remembrance no more tender
save that she gave him a lost faraway
wistfully brooding something baffling him.

But if he touched her knee or brushed her shoulder,
she used to pet and quiet him: Soon, soon.

Nor was she all his own again until
she came and tucked him in and heard his prayers;
then, from her fingers' touch and the last kiss
her mother-blood streamed through him in the darkness,

and he was very hers—and that was right.

Playboy to Premier

LÉON BLUM, MAN AND STATESMAN. By Geoffrey Fraser and Thadée Natanson. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by DAVID H. POPPER

OFF to a highly debatable start in singling out Léon Blum with Lenin and Roosevelt as the three great post-war social experimenters, Messrs. Fraser and Natanson quickly settle down to an entertaining narrative of the life of this extraordinary French Jew. To them, it is apparent, Blum's remarkable growth in stature is a phenomenon at least as worthy of comment as his political career. Here is a bourgeois dilettante who has become a proletarian leader, a literary figure turned politician, a theorist galvanized by circumstance into a man of action.

In 1892 the young Blum was adjudged "infernally cheeky but irresistibly charming" by the staff of a review edited by M. Natanson. In 1896 he met the great French socialist Jaurès, whose disciple he has remained; the two fought together to clear the name of Alfred Dreyfus. Declining to play an active part in politics, Blum nevertheless became an intellectual light in socialist circles. He did not enter parliament until 1919; shortly thereafter the split into socialist and communist factions left him the leader of a minority remnant. There followed years of assiduous parliamentary opposition—years of experience during which programs were being adumbrated and tactics evolved. With the bankruptcy of the Right and France's descent into the doldrums in 1936, Léon Blum finally proved his mettle. The first titular leader of the Popular Front, and today one of its spiritual fathers, he more than any other individual was responsible for the temporary rejuvenation of the tottering democracy of France.

M. Natanson's status as one of Blum's intimate circle of friends, though fortunate in that it affords an insight into the socialist leader's character, naturally precludes a truly critical interpretation of his work as premier. We must wait for a future historian to perform the inevitable synthesis. Meanwhile, readers will find food for thought in the authors' suggestion that if democratic reform fails Blum may yet become a leader of the men behind the barricades. This is an unlikely contingency, to be sure; yet bracketing Blum with Lenin may conceivably be far-sighted rather than far-fetched. The contrast between the pacific Frenchman and the Soviet revolutionary is extreme—but is the gap much greater than that which separates the playboy from the premier? This is the tacit question, one feels, which is raised by this interesting biography of a man still in the flood tide of his career.

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The Asquith Family

MOMENTS OF MEMORY. RECOLLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS. By Herbert Asquith. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by FRANCIS WILLIAMSON

MR. ASQUITH'S book is the chronicle of life in a distinguished family. The life follows the pattern of upper-class England, flowing logically from an early introduction to cricket and the Empire, through Winchester and Oxford, and culminating in dinner with Mr. Gladstone. The family was distinguished by H. H. Asquith, England's Prime Minister during the early years of the war, and the last of the Gladstonian liberals to fall victim to British *Realpolitik* of the twentieth century.

It was a smug world which greeted Herbert Asquith, but many things disturbed the Victorian complacency. One was the Boer War, which "came far nearer to us than any of the ordinary political questions of the day, the budget, the Reform of the House of Lords." The suffragettes also ruffled the calm by seeking publicity in direct action, attacking churches, the Coronation Chair, and grandstands, "thereby estranging from their cause classes of great numbers and influence, giving offence to Churchmen, lovers of cricket, football . . . and loyal adherents of the King."

But the most disturbing factor was British *Realpolitik* after 1900. Herbert Asquith interprets the momentous change in British diplomacy, which made the World War inevitable, solely in terms of the personalities of political leaders. He sees nothing peculiar in reporting that on August 1, 1914, his father said that England was under no obligation to defend France and that an expeditionary force to the continent was out of the question, which conflicts with Grey's confession three days later. Herbert Asquith says that "while Grey was striving to smooth the path to peace, sinister influences, hostile and imponderable, seemed to be moving behind the veils of diplomacy," yet these mystic forces are well described in his father's book, "Genesis of the War."

There are interesting spots in the book in spite of its liberal moralizing, such as the descriptions of D. H. Lawrence and John Buchan. The elder Asquith largely disappears, appearing only at times of Imperial crisis. He seems to be a vague myth of a preoccupied man, coming home either to read the classics or to rush back to Downing Street. The best account of the elder Asquith and his famous wife may be found in his own books. The book of the son, however, is of value, but not in showing the nature of a family or the processes of history. Its value lies in revealing the inherent tragedy of the so-called "liberal mind" moving in the strange, new world of the twentieth century.

Francis Williamson is a member of the department of history of the College of the City of New York.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE DEVIL TO PAY *Ellery Queen* (Stokes: $2.)	Ellery Queen, plus beard, in Hollywood, saves worthy son of crooked utilities magnate from burning for dad's poisonous demise.	Novel murder method, customary Queen slickness, some quaint studio characters — but, please, Mr. Q., come home from California.	Adroit
WARRANT FOR X *Philip MacDonald* (Crime Club: $2.)	American playwright in England overhears kidnap plot. Col. Gethryn's wit and cunning solve what is overheard —almost too late.	Exciting paper-chase with the usual Gethryn brilliance, plus mild love interest, and Scotland Yard sleuths for seasoning.	Swell concoction
DEATH ON THE NILE *Agatha Christie* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Three killings on Nile River excursion boat, overloaded with suspicious characters, solved by Hercule Poirot.	Slightly transparent plot, plethora of action, but all is handled with customary Christie expertness.	Very good
MYSTERY WEEK END *Percival Wilde* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.)	Winter sports at Conn. inn disarranged by double murder. Observant visitor notes incongruities and slayer flees on snowshoes.	Novel method of narration, express-train action, and streamlined dialogue cover minor blabs in not too airtight plot.	Exhilarating
THE CASE OF THE HANGING LADY *Nard Jones* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Rich yachtsman's wife unorthodoxly suspended from masthead. Husband later slain Bristol fashion. Gruff Comm. Martin steers slayer to dock.	Slippery goings-on of swift Pacific Coast nautical society sleekly chronicled with amateur doing dangerous and effective sleuthing.	Average
MURDER IN AMBER *Colver Harris* (Hillman-Curl: $2.)	Plunk on head kills one trans-Pacific traveler, another dies suspiciously, and detective Fowler, fortunately aboard, has nice problem.	Smuggled jewels, man of mystery, Biblical cryptogram, and comic fat lady enliven rather pedestrian shipboard yarn.	Innocuous

Bonanza

BOOM TOWN. By Jack O'Connor. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES D. HART

THIS is a slick, hardboiled story of the swift cycle which turned the fresh Arizona canyon wilderness into a roaring settlement dependent upon a bonanza silver mine, and left it a dry, wornout desert. At the crest of the swing comes the main part of this book with its maddened mine-hunters who swarm over the Southwest's crags, rape its rocks for silver, and leave behind nothing but a great, caved-in shaft, surrounded by remnants of a sleazy town formerly peopled by gamblers, miners, and painted floozies. The town owed its existence to Smiling Frank O'Rielly, a brazen Mick who was tough in handling his dukes but soft around the heart. His partner, Larry Richards, possessed all the proper refinement of a good New England background, knew his engineering, but was weak and sniveling when it came to handling men and women. Together they made a great mining team until Larry acquired a beautiful Eastern bride who made the swellest prostitute in the whole state look like a Mexican chippy from a four-bit crib. Things began to happen then. The tough O'Rielly's romantic streak got the better of him, and he went wispy over Joyce Richards, who in turn became hard and tense over the strong masculinity which her husband could not offer. In the background of the world in which these three play out their triangle move tinhorn gamblers, villainous Wall Street financiers, stupid, boastful desperadoes, and so many chippies that if one laid them end to end they could supply the whole Barbary Coast. The minor characters are two-dimensional, and the major ones are just the stereotyped figures of Western melodrama dressed up with a modern veneer. Instead of the yippee-yi-yo and cloying purity of the pulp Western stories, the author has plunged into the tough bawdy-tawdry of the James M. Cain school. Mr. O'Connor's boom town is evidently peopled by hundred of common mining men working in the fabulous Lucky Bighorn Silver Company, but so far as this book is concerned they do not exist, and what they thought of the civilizations, they helped create, or what part they played in it, is never taken into account. As for the result, well, the frontier is still the wide open spaces in literature.

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ON A CERTAIN warm Spring morning of 1804, the Countess Dzjunka Rasonski, the young and beautiful wife of a Polish nobleman, visited Napoleon, Emperor of the French, by request, at the palace of the Tuileries . . .

For months this young woman had bent every effort of her life to arrange this meeting . . . it was not easy to arrange, for not only was the position of women in Poland determined by the rigid code of a feudal, almost savage society, but her husband, Prince Rasonski, happened to be insanely jealous. The reason for his jealousy lay not only in his nature, but in that the girl he had married had never become, in fact, his wife . . .

Yet Dzjunka had caused the meeting to take place over all obstacles, because she cherished in her heart an intense, burning patriotism that wept for the fate of her country, racked and despoiled and divided by Prussia, Austria and Russia in turn, and because she felt that Napoleon, the conqueror and the deliverer, was the one man in the world who could save her country . . . What happened to her, personally, she did not care . . .

She was with Napoleon a long time, longer than Moncourt, her escort and venerable friend of her father, waiting below, cared to think about. When she finally rejoined him, Poland was perhaps no nearer liberation. But the fate of Dzjunka had been changed for all time . . .

How that visit was bound up in the story of the nobles and the people of Poland is told in a series of remarkable pictures of Europe racked by war and intrigue during the time of the First Empire. In the forefront of the intrigue was the Prince Rasonski, a man so unattractive that women could suffer him only in the dark. The beards of his serfs grew as symbols of the curious *bund* he established to accomplish his object. How he laid the foundations of his scheme upon the building of an estate second to none in Poland; how he attempted to betray Napoleon and how his house of cards came tumbling to earth when he discovered that his wife — on the very day of Austerlitz — had borne Napoleon a son . . . make a story which for drama and for the scrupulous attention to historical realities has perhaps not been equalled in recent years.

The author of this book is Paul Frischauer. He is a Viennese by birth, a war veteran who enlisted at the age of sixteen and fought on the Serbian, Russian, and Italian fronts, a biographer of note (Garibaldi, Beaumarchais, and Prince Eugene are three of his subjects). He has been until now practically unknown as a writer in America; we believe that with the publication of A GREAT LORD he will be very much in the forefront of the book world here as he has been in Europe. It is his major work, his first large-scale historical novel, for which he has been gathering material for many years, during which time he came across the actual records of the Polish family upon whose history this story is based.

A GREAT LORD has the romantic qualities that appeal to a wide public. Like *So Great a Man* and *Conquest* it promises rich enjoyment. It is, in addition, unusual both as historical reconstruction and as a literary performance.

A Great Lord

By PAUL FRISCHAUER

$2.50 *RANDOM HOUSE*

SOME ADVANCE OPINIONS:

"Exciting . . . rings with authenticity . . . a moving account of a grimly important period in European history." —*New York Times*

"Has all the pageantry and color of its time . . . a grand book . . . it clicked in England and we believe that it will repeat over here."—Donald Gordon in *The American News of Books*

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Population: 25,000

WE AMERICANS: A Study of Cleavage in an American City. By Elin L. Anderson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1937.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

MISS ANDERSON has chosen Burlington, Vermont for the purpose of studying, with a technique similar to that used by the Lynds in Muncie, the lines of social cleavage. A quiet old commercial city of 25,000 inhabitants, with a solid backlog of Old Americans and a sufficient number of other ethnic groups to provide material bearing on the melting-pot, Burlington presented simpler problems than larger or more specially industrial cities, and was therefore more suited to the present state of sociological study. Local pride would perhaps insist that there is something forever Vermont about Burlington that makes it by no means a "typical" American city. But Miss Anderson has carried out her work with great tact, and makes no claim to have reached absolute and universal conclusions. Nor does she attempt an exhaustive sociological survey of the city. She limits herself to the major group-cleavages which can be more or less objectively measured.

These cleavages she finds to be three: economic, ethnic, and religious. Burlington is a town of small business, and in terms of economic classes, is divided between business and professional people and working people. Ethnically, the French-Canadian stock is the most numerous, numbering about two-fifths of the total; the Old Americans, with the kindred British and British-Canadians, number roughly one-third; there are over 1000 Irish, some 800 Jews, 300-odd each of Italians and Germans; other ethnic groups are too few in numbers to provide satisfactory material for a study of this sort. Religiously, the city now divides in a ratio of about sixty to forty in favor of the Catholic over the Protestant group. Miss Anderson does not find sectarian differences within the Protestants to be important. The Catholic-Protestant cleavage, however, she thinks is in some respects the most hard-and-fast of all. The Old Americans are almost all middle class and Protestant; the French-Canadians are almost all working class and Catholic. Nevertheless, social antagonisms in Burlington are by no means simple, two-way antagonisms, poor vs. rich, Yankees vs. Canucks, but ramify and interlace in various ways. These antagonisms Miss Anderson studies with a good deal of detachment. She does not come to any conclusions which will surprise those who know New England small towns, but she puts down these conclusions clearly and carefully. Here and there odd touches from her interviews with assorted Burlingtonians bring color and even humor to a sober work generally restrained by the guild-requirements of sociology. There is, for instance, the very concrete social hierarchy distinguished by a French-Canadian woman; the Old Americans play contract, the Irish play auction, and the French-Canadians play whist.

Miss Anderson's French-Canadian group is a bit unduly repressed, a bit lacking in its own elite, to be quite typical of the position of that important group in New England as a whole, where about one person in seven is now of French-Canadian stock. The group has certainly not achieved as interesting an elite as has the Irish, nor has it raised its general economic level as has the Irish. But had Miss Anderson included in her study the little city of Winooski, virtually a part of Burlington, she would have had a somewhat more representative cross-section of the French-Canadian group.

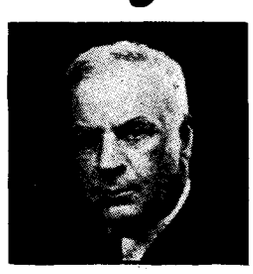
There are signs throughout the book that Miss Anderson, like so many other sociologists, undertook her study with an "ideal" of how Americans ought to live together. Yet she manages to report the facts—which do not, even in peaceful Burlington, coincide with the ideals expressed in most writing about Americanism—without any bitterness of moral indignation, though, of course, also without any uncomfortable cynicism. It looks as if she became even more interested in Burlington as it is than in Burlington as she would like to have it, which is a most hopeful sign for American sociology.

This book has just received the John Anisfield Prize.

A NEW BOOK OF POEMS BY

Arthur Stringer

AUTHOR OF "OUT OF ERIN"



THE OLD WOMAN REMEMBERS

and Other Irish Poems

The color, the wistful, changeable moods and the romance of Ireland distinguish these new poems by a noted poet who knows and loves Ireland. He has caught here not only the commoner manifestations of the Irish temperament, but also ironic and subtle connotations; and, even more notably, that compassion which marks the enduring ones, Hardy and Housman. $1.25

BOBBS-MERRILL

Letters to the Editor

(*Continued from page* 9)

umes in the Oxford World Classics. Are there any more except the one published a couple of months ago in the Classics, which I had on my Christmas list and didn't get? I shall have it soon, however.

E. R. ERVIN.

Arlington, Mass.

Statistics Wanted

SIR:—May I add my word to that of Mr. Quercus and Mr. Hanbridge? I have been reading Constance Holme's novels in the World's Classics series for five years now and have had the pleasure and privilege of introducing her to many of my friends who naturally enough, considering the books, have passed on their enthusiasm to others. I would like to see the statistics on the sale of her works if merely to see what effects on sales inclusion in a distinguished list and almost unavoidable personal commendation have.

EDWARD CHANDLER.

St. James School,
Maryland.

Statistics Provided

SIR:—We notice in "Trade Winds" of January 22nd Quercus's statement that he is "still hunting for someone who has actually read some of Constance Holme's novels."

She happens to be one of our most popular authors, and in England is a phenomenally successful rental library author.

Sales on "The Lonely Plough" up to October, 1937, were over 35,000 in England and America.

RUTH G. BROWN.

Oxford University Press,
New York City.

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Chinese Culture

CHINA. A SHORT CULTURAL HISTORY. By C. P. Fitzgerald. Edited by Professor C. G. Seligman. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 1938. $7.50.

Reviewed by KENNETH S. LATOURETTE

HERE is an American edition of an English work which was first published in 1935. It lives up to its title. It is a history of Chinese culture and it is a compact summary. It conforms to the traditional chronological framework of orthodox Chinese historiography, and, indeed, it is not to be desired that it should do otherwise. A sufficient account of political events is given to make the reader aware of the fashion in which generals, statesmen, and the fabric of government interacted with other phases of Chinese life. Each of the major periods stands out as an entity. The author has succeeded in making clear what is not always obvious to the Western amateur in things sinological, that Chinese history is not a tedious repetition of dynasties, but that the cultural development of the land falls into periods almost as distinct and as marked as those of the Occident.

The chief emphasis is upon political history, art, literature, and philosophy. The pictures of economic changes and of the growth and alterations in such basic social institutions as the family are fragmentary and disappointing. To expect them to be otherwise, however, is to ask too much. The Chinese themselves have yet to give an adequate account of these phases of their past.

In some ways, Mr. Fitzgerald's work is a distinct disappointment. It falls lamentably short of the high standard set by Sansom's "Japan." To enumerate its defects would prolong this review unduly. Only a few of the more prominent can be mentioned. On so important a matter as the introduction of Buddhism, the ancient story of the dream of Han Ming Ti and the resulting embassy is repeated, and that in spite of the fact that it has been more than a quarter of a century since the account was shown to have been a pious and hoary fabrication. The six and a half centuries since the Sung are treated in quite too cursory and condensed a fashion. One misses, for example, any mention of the important philosopher Wang Yang-ming, of the Ming Dynasty, and of the notable Han School of the Ch'ing whose achievements in historical criticism were of first class importance. And why should an entire chapter be given to the T'ai P'ing movement when only the barest mention is made of the other consequences of the impact of the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Even then the nature and significance of the movement are not correctly appraised. The book has some excellencies, but it is ill-proportioned, in its later portions is poorly organized, and is by no means comprehensive of the best scholarship on things Chinese. It is beautifully illustrated, and contains a variety of useful maps.

Kenneth S. Latourette, professor of Oriental history at Yale University is the author of "The Development of China."

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Annual Report

IN 1937. By A. C. Eurich and E. C. Wilson. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES MCD. PUCKETTE

MR. EURICH and Mr. Wilson, who are the news questionnaire makers of *Time*, bring out promptly this annual summary of events. Like last year's, the volume is a workmanlike achievement—concise, well-proportioned, and with just enough background information to help the reader to a better grasp of the news. The authors' style is readable, their matter informative, and one who wishes to brush up on affairs will find it profitable to survey the year with Mr. Eurich and Mr. Wilson. The review form is popular; the newspapers and the news magazines now give weekly summaries, other magazines provide monthly histories, the book publishers offer reviews of the year, the decade, the generation, and Mr. Van Loon and Mr. Wells eventually boil mankind's achievements all down into single books.

The compilers of "In 1937" properly put the constitutional issue and the Supreme Court struggle first in importance in the national section of the book. Their analysis of this bitter fight is impartial, except that one or two more proponents from the law schools might have been mentioned. Otherwise the report on the state of the nation in 1937 is excellent, and the same comment can be made on the chapters on world affairs. Perhaps finance and banking rate another page or two more than is given to them.

It is interesting to compare the relative space given to fields of news in the daily newspapers and in this annual review. Sports lose in importance in the perspective of a full year; the really significant news in this department is small. The chapters on science and religion, and on literature and the arts are interesting and helpful.

A few suggestions occur to a hasty reviewer of a year boiled down—more specific dates of events might add to the value of the summaries; the photographs could be better selected; and the important Kennedy report on shipping seems to have been omitted.

Charles Mc.D. Puckette is on the staff of the New York Times.

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The Chances for Life Extension

THE SPAN OF LIFE. By William Marias Malisoff. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH, M.D.

THIS is a difficult book to classify. Full of fascinating facts every educated layman should find of interest, it will prove pretty stiff reading for most of them, in spite of the glossary appended, while to the scientist it may seem more like a note-book than a treatise. Nevertheless few who attempt it will be sorry, for it is stimulating throughout. Concerned primarily with death, it is far from depressing. The author belongs to those scientists who by reason of study as well as temperament, support the "open door" policy for all scientific investigation, and he spurns the "gray little men of science" who accept any theory in the field of the sciences as settled for all time. Thus he refuses to consider the span of life as indubitably determined either by heredity or a super power, and he thinks it extremely likely that something can be done about it. As a chemist he is inclined to think that the way may lie in part at least in finding a method of getting rid of the cholesterol that piles up with the years in our tissues, destroys their elasticity, and is largely responsible of many of those signs of senescence more distressing to onlookers than death itself. But by whatever means, he is convinced that if scientists are unflagging in their search, human life may be prolonged almost indefinitely. This in his thesis, his slogan, "Time and Tide will wait."

All of this comes in the last two chapters. In the first five he attempts to review the entire subject as pursued down through the ages by philosophers, quacks, and scientists. To encompass so vast a field necessitates a certain sketchiness of treatment, but the interest does not flag, and the book is refreshingly free from the banalities of the life-begins-at-forty school, which he dismisses as "attempts to shout the nasty discomfort down. Dr. Malisoff with all his optimism is a realistic scientist. He offers no hope to those now living who yearn to reach the hundred mark. If we are to circumvent age and death, a vast amount of research will be required.

Democratic Leader

HIS EXCELLENCY GEORGE CLINTON: Critic of the Constitution. By E. Wilder Spaulding. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

MR. SPAULDING tells us that George Clinton is the most important individual in American history who has not had a biography. It is a bold assertion, but perhaps it is true. Because he was always a local figure, never a national one; because his Federalist opponents, Jay and Hamilton, towered so distinctly above him; because his nephew DeWitt Clinton was so much more salient and interesting a leader, he has been neglected. Yet he was the most consistently successful politician of his time. Seven times elected governor of New York, twice elected vice-President, once brought almost within grasp of the Presidency, he was the idol of the New York masses throughout most of his adult life. Not Silas Wright, not Samuel J. Tilden, not Alfred E. Smith, equalled at the height of their influence the sway which George Clinton exercised over the plain voter of the State. He ruled it, moreover, at a time when the importance of the State as compared with the nation was far greater than today. In a negative way, he did become a national figure. Paradoxically, he may be called one of the makers of that Constitution of which Mr. Spaulding justly calls him a critic. Because he so sturdily opposed any increase in the powers of the general government under the Articles of Confederation, because in 1783 he vetoed for New York the proposal to give Congress a five per cent impost, the Confederation broke down, and the new frame of government became an absolute necessity.

The principal significance of Clinton's career is as an early type of democratic leader. To follow him in detail throughout the intricate labyrinth of New York politics from independence down to 1812 is a dull and not very profitable task. But to study the methods by which this son of an immigrant farmer, himself by turns farmer, soldier, surveyor, rural lawyer, land-speculator, and politician, took a commonwealth long dominated by a few aristocratic families, caught it into the palm of his hand, and held it tightly there, is a task of fascinating interest. Clinton knew how to build up a machine and to keep it well lubricated. He had personal qualities, too, a rugged manliness, a transparent honesty, which the plain people loved. Jay and Hamilton were manifestly greater men, but the very complexity and profundity which made them great aroused popular distrust.

Mr. Spaulding has told his story well. He has concentrated his attention upon the essentials; his research has been thorough and shrewd; he has planned his book carefully, and written clearly and at times vividly. He has added to our knowledge of New York and national affairs during and just after the Revolution. But what is more important, he has presented an excellent portrait of one of the most successful political leaders the country has known, and provided the materials for analyzing his success.

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

OLD Q found himself a little fore-done by a long succession of im-pingeing pressures, so he filled a bag with publishers' publicity-notes and here he is at a hotel in Atlantic City listening to a February wind moan about the lofty structure. ☞And by happy chance at Clement's bookstore on the Boardwalk he found (for 10 cents) a Clark Russell sea-story he had never read, *Little Loo,* which is good going as a winter's tale. ☞Another pleasant book-find, up toward the old abandoned Absecon Lighthouse, was at Frank's Newsstand which sells hot dogs, coffee, sauerkraut, old magazines and old books. ☞Frank himself was erst in the book business but found it difficult: when he fell back upon hot dogs he took his over-stock along, and there they are shelved up above the sausage alcoves. In the 15 cent lot Old Q found a copy of Richard Garnett's *John Milton* with the late James Huneker's bookplate in it. This had come to Atlantic City, according to a label in it, by way of Charles Pratt's famous old second-hand store at 161 6th Ave. ☞And another adventure: in Robert Housley's little portrait studio opposite the Heinz Pier we saw a drawing (and a very good likeness) of Joseph Conrad. We stopped in to examine it, and Mr. Housley said he keeps it there to see how many of his customers identify it. "Most people think it's the former Kaiser," he remarked. Mr. Housley, who came originally from Lancashire, is a great admirer of the magnetic Pole, so much so that he named his son Conrad. ☞With his customary good fortune, Old Q was the first to meet the beautiful Dream girl who was the feature attraction of the Artists and Models Ball being held at the Traymore Hotel; she was elected as America's Dream Girl, it appears, by a jury of artists in New York, and sent down to Atlantic City to be queen of the occasion. ☞Old Q, in honor of the State of Georgia for which our Dream Girl is named (Georgia Carroll) bought her a Coca Cola and gave her good advice. "In your arduous career as a Dream Girl," he said, "always carry one of these," and showed her his own talis-man. It will be more useful, he asserted, than the key to Atlantic City which had just been given her by the local Chamber of Commerce. It is a paper-clip which, straightened out to serve as a pipe-cleaner, can also be used as paper-cutter, toothpick, skeleton key, corkscrew, mani-cure, swizzle-stick, or even eye-gouge.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 203)

LANG—"LETTERS TO DEAD AUTHORS."

How poor the world of fancy would be if in some ruin of the social system the books of Dickens were lost and if The Dodger and Mr. Crinkle and Miss Squeers and Sam Weller and Mrs. Gamp and Dick Swiveller were to perish.

☞The lovely Miss Carroll, gentle and perhaps somewhat baffled by her respon-sibilities, did not take this very seriously; but no Dream Girl ever had better coun-sel. ☞After which Old Q went to bed with a copy of the London Times *Lit. Supp.* and slept peacefully. ☞In the lat-ter he found a most interesting item, viz. that Edward Perry, graduate student at the University of Toronto, is working on a biography of Alexander Smith (1829-67) the author of our old favorite *Dream-thorp.* ☞We are gratified to learn also that the illustrated edition of that book, for which Walter Jack Duncan has done some remarkably charming drawings, is now definitely announced by Lippincott. ☞In the same issue of the *Times Lit. Supp.* we found a very intelligent letter from a Scottish correspondent (G. St. Quintin) suggesting that the famous lines of Keats, "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, that is all Ye know on earth and all ye need to know" are addressed *not* to man-kind in general but to the figures on the Grecian Urn itself. This, truly, is the only way that famous utterance would make real sense. ☞We haven't had much time to get at our bagfull of publishers' notes because the air on the Boardwalk is strong and keen, and we have been listen-ing to the hullabaloo of the auctioneers selling off lace tablecloths. ☞On the train to Philadelphia we saw a man deeply ab-sorbed in *The Brothers Ashkenazi;* he identified himself as the proprietor of the lunch-wagon at Bryn Mawr, Pa. ☞In the train to Atlantic City was a stripling reading *Lord Jim.*

☞Pleased to see that one of the new Modern Library titles is the late Edmund Pearson's *Studies in Murder,* including not only one of Mr. Pearson's pieces about Lizzie Borden (who was Pearson's King Charles's Head) but also that very grievous story of the assassination on 23rd Street, N. Y. City, in 1870, in which the victim was a collateral ancestor of one of our most admired novelists today. ☞In-cidentally, the Modern Library catalogue is probably the only place in literature where Swinburne is always referred to as Charles (without the Algernon). ☞Among recent detective stories of more than usual merit, we recommend *Warrant for X* by Philip MacDonald. The hero of this tale is an American dramatist in Lon-don, and the starting-point of his discon-certing adventure is reading G. K. Ches-terton's *The Napoleon of Notting Hill.* ☞The current rate for a good copy of Gissing's *Ryecroft,* in first edition, seems to be (according to the catalogue of Retz & Storm, 598 Madison Ave., N. Y. C.) $40. ☞The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, celebrates this month sixty years of pub-lishing activity. Its earliest publication was the *American Journal of Mathematics* which began in 1878. Though several other university presses issue annually a larger number of books than Johns Hop-kins, its latest catalogue shows as many as 950 titles in print. ☞An even longer record is that of the distinguished old house of D. Van Nostrand Company, which completes this year nine decades of scientific and technical publishing. The company was organized in 1848 to import military books from Europe, and one of its early publications was Casey's *Hand-book of Military Tactics* which was the official manual of the Northern armies during the Civil War. To celebrate its 90th birthday, Van Nostrand publishes this month a one-volume Scientific Encyclo-paedia in 1500 pages with 1200 illustra-tions. ☞A comparison that somehow strikes us as quaint is the assertion in Doubleday's spring catalogue that Mr. Maugham's *The Summing Up* will take its place in literature beside Newman's

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Apologia Pro Vita Sua. ☞The Doubleday spring list is, as usual, a vigorous one: we look forward particularly to T. S. Stribling's new novel, which is said to have some fun with the Summer School of Megalopolis University, viz. Columbia. ☞The catalogue man is on dangerous ground when he says that Mr. McFee's new novel (*Derelicts*) has "a theme which might be called Conradian." It undoubtedly will be, by every reviewer; but nothing grieves an author as much as these inherited labels; from which, however, there is never any escape. ☞One of the publishers whose announcements we have learned to watch is Mr. Peter Davies of London. He said last autumn "There is no living writer for whose intellect, poetic truth and haunting verbalistic brilliance the composer of this 'blurb' has a profounder admiration than Christina Stead." Of her book *The Salzburg Tales* we heard many fine reports; the new one is called *The Revolving Hive.*

☞It appears that though there have been innumerable books about Collecting, and ditto about Bibles, there has never been a volume to put the two ideas together. Now the Rev. Edwin A. R. Rumball-Petrie, long known to Bible-fanciers, has written, and Philip C. Duschnes (507 Fifth Ave.) will publish Feb. 21, *Rare Bibles: An Introduction for Collectors.*

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	16-Z	17-C		18-F	19-R	20-M	21-D		22-U	23-X	24-M		25-K	26-C		27-U
28-J	29-M	30-S	31-N	32-O		33-U	34-T	35-V	36-F	37-N	38-P	39-W	40-E		41-U	42-O
43-B	44-Z		45-Y	46-G		47-G	48-C	49-Q		50-R	51-I	52-H	53-O	54-B	55-M	56-V
	57-A	58-Z		59-T	60-H	61-X	62-R	63-Q	64-B	65-K		66-W	67-P	68-Q	69-X	70-F
	71-H	72-N	73-W		74-O	75-B	76-G		77-Z	78-Y	79-A		80-X	81-Q	82-D	83-F
	84-Q	85-R		86-N	87-C	88-I	89-J	90-E	91-P		92-D	93-N	94-I		95-S	96-J
97-O	98-N	99-D	100-K		101-J	102-A	103-D	104-B		105-C	106-O	107-K		108-L	109-Q	
110-T	111-V	112-S	113-R	114-C	115-M		116-Y	117-O	118-C		119-W	120-U	121-T	122-G	123-R	
124-L	125-N	126-Z		127-F	128-E	129-U	130-P		131-G	132-C	133-T		134-O	135-L		136-N
137-H	138-O		139-C	140-E	141-D	142-S	143-A		144-Y	145-F	146-E		147-O	148-Z	149-H	150-Q
	151-D	152-Z		153-H	154-K	155-S		156-E	157-V	158-P	159-B		160-G	161-A	162-L	163-Y
	164-S	165-B	166-Z		167-U	168-M	169-E	170-V								

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 21 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Fuss; perturbation.

B. Steady.

C. Bragging bully.

D. Unsymmetrical.

E. Discloses; tells.

F. Morally correct; just.

G. Irregular (of markets, crops).

H. Wife of Ahasuerus.

I. Goddess of Dawn (Gr.).

J. Implants firmly.

K. Drama by Ibsen.

L. Jot.

M. Poem by Samuel Johnson.

N. Righteously angry.

O. Having no engagements; free.

P. Effeminate boy (colloq.).

Q. Viverrine mammal of India.

R. Yields; grants.

S. Declines to accept.

T. Elaborately adorned.

U. Certifies.

V. Brilliancy of achievement.

W. Knots.

X. Official high priest's garment (Bib.).

Y. Babylonian goddess.

Z. Nicholas Nickleby's School.

WORDS

A.	102 9 57 161 79 143
B.	64 5 43 165 75 159 54 104
C.	105 139 114 87 118 48 132 17 26
D.	12 82 141 21 151 92 103 99
E.	169 90 140 128 146 156 40
F.	4 127 83 145 18 36 70
G.	46 122 131 47 160 76
H.	60 71 52 137 153 149
I.	51 88 94
J.	28 89 101 96 1
K.	6 154 25 65 107 100
L.	162 135 108 124
M.	115 29 55 20 168 24
N.	37 72 15 93 86 125 31 98 136
O.	106 32 42 134 147 97 53 117 138 74
P.	158 67 38 130 91
Q.	10 81 63 68 84 109 150 49
R.	113 7 85 19 62 50 123
S.	3 142 30 155 112 164 95
T.	13 110 34 59 133 121
U.	33 27 167 41 22 120 129
V.	111 35 170 157 56
W.	66 14 73 39 119
X.	61 2 69 23 80
Y.	45 163 78 116 144 8
Z.	126 16 77 148 166 11 58 44 152

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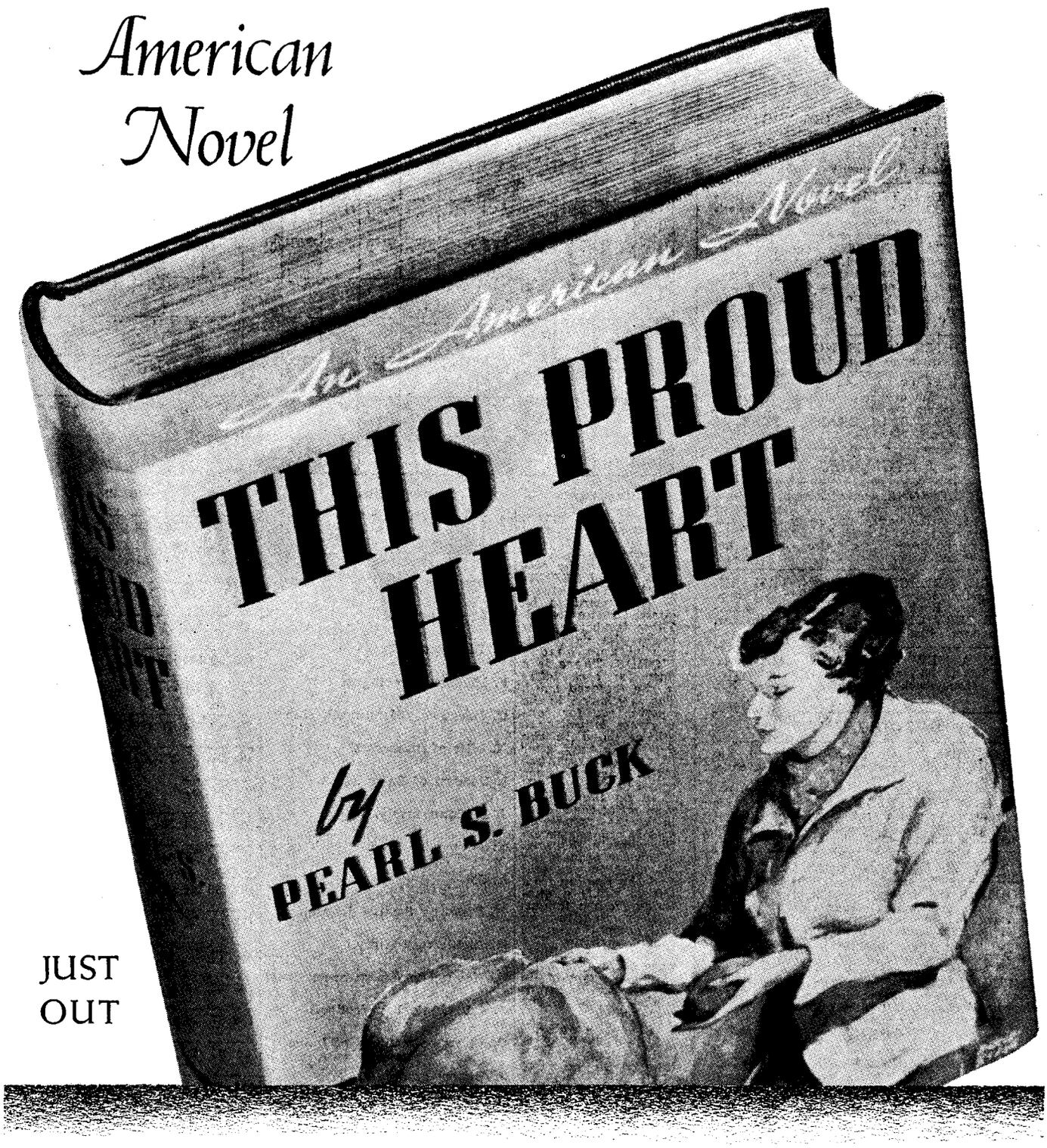

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